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Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the sixty-first session

Observer status for the OPEC Fund for International Development in the General Assembly

Letter dated 11 May 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have the honour to request the inclusion in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session of an item entitled "Observer status for the OPEC Fund for International Development in the General Assembly". An explanatory memorandum in support of the above request (see annex I) and a draft resolution (see annex II) are annexed in accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure.

I have the honour to request further that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Fawzi A. **Shobokshi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

1. The OPEC Fund for International Development ("the Fund") was established in 1976 by member countries of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in their collective desire to consolidate their financial assistance to other developing countries, in addition to the existing roles played through bilateral and multilateral channels of cooperation. The Fund therefore developed over the last 30 years as a multilateral agency for financial cooperation with the objective of providing assistance to developing countries in their economic and social development efforts.

2. The Fund has for over three decades been engaged in international development issues and has on numerous occasions worked with and supported the missions and activities of the United Nations and its various specialized agencies, programmes and funds on matters of interest to the General Assembly, including sustainable economic development of poor and low-income countries, poverty eradication and environmental development, on which more detailed information has been provided below.

3. The Fund also participated, by invitation, in several international conferences convened under the auspices of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Recent examples of these include the 2000 Millennium Summit, the 2002 Barcelona AIDS Conference and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. In addition, the Fund will be participating later in the year in a similar conference to be held in Toronto.

4. The activities of the Fund are indeed of interest to the General Assembly, as the sphere of cooperation between the Fund and the United Nations has grown remarkably broader and more integrated. The Fund has consistently and increasingly worked with the United Nations and its subsidiary organs and the specialized agencies in promoting the values, goals and aspirations that are universally humanitarian, which the United Nations has come to symbolize. Specifically, the Fund has actively employed its resources, assets, personnel and influence to promote economic development, social integration, gender parity, access to health care and sanitary water systems and the study of international law, in the countries in which it operates. A summary of the activities of the Fund in this regard is provided below.

5. The participation of the Fund as an observer at the proceedings of the General Assembly would enhance further cooperation between the United Nations and the Fund and facilitate the work of the Fund as an intergovernmental international development organization.

Summary of the OPEC Fund's operations

A. Overview of loans

6. The Fund has made several loans, of which total commitments and disbursements as of December 2005 include public sector lending operations, with a total of $5.95 billion committed and over $3.74 billion disbursed, including

commitments made over the past four years ranging between $883 million in project financing and $9.5 million in programme financing.

7. Private sector operations are approximated at 83 operations valued at $417.9 million committed and over $198.5 million disbursed. The sectors to which loans were distributed include financial services, health, industry, infrastructure, telecommunications, tourism and transportation. The regions to which loans were distributed include Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America/Caribbean.

B. Overview of grants

8. Total commitments and disbursements as of December 2005 for the grant programme are approximated at 773 grants worth $348.6 million committed and over $243.2 million disbursed, including grants in support of technical assistance, with $111.5 million committed and $101.2 million disbursed; special contribution to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), with $20 million committed and $20 million disbursed; research and similar activities, with $8.3 million committed and $6.6 million disbursed; emergency aid, with $52.1 million committed and $47.8 million disbursed; the HIV/AIDS Special Account, with $34.2 million committed and $19.6 million disbursed; the Food Aid Special Grant Account, with $20 million committed and $17.8 million disbursed; and the Common Fund for Commodities, with $83.5 million committed and $17.7 million disbursed.

C. Overview of debt relief through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative

9. Total commitments and disbursements as of December 2005 are approximately $206.9 million committed and over $155 million disbursed, including debt relief commitments made over the last four years of $18.2 million in commitments (2002), $10 million in commitments and $43.1 million in disbursements (2003), $33 million in disbursements (2004) and $50.4 million in commitments (2005).

D. Overview of education and research commitments

10. About $95 million in loans and $4.4 million in grants have been made available over the last four years, to support various education and research projects, including grants in furtherance of the study of international law, grants to promote the literacy level among women, and grants to specialized agencies of the United Nations system to assist in fulfilling their mandate, such as grants to the World Meteorological Organization, UNICEF and UNESCO, to mention a few.

E. Overview of emergency aid and assistance

11. About $8 million has been made available in grants over the last four years, as emergency aid assistance to victims of natural disasters, including $1.2 million channelled through the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) for the Indian Ocean Tsunami relief, $1.25 million loan to Algeria and Iran for earthquake relief, $2 million in grants to the Dominican Republic and Haiti for flood victims with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of

Humanitarian Affairs as implementing agency and a $200,000 grant to Chad and the Sudan for armed conflict relief channelled through IFRC.

F. Overview of energy commitments

12. About $110 million in loans and $2.2 million in grants have been made available over the last four years to support energy projects, including a $2.4 million loan to Tajikistan for regional power modernization with the Asian Development Bank as co-financer and grants of approximately $110,000 each to the Haitian and Honduran renewable energy projects drawn from the UNDP Energy Account.

G. Overview of food and agricultural aid commitments

13. About $186 million in loans and $29 million in grants have been made available over the last four years to support various agricultural development and food production programmes, including $20 million in grants to the Food Aid Special Grant Account, which includes disbursements to the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission/WFP and IFAD, $200,000 in grants to IAEA for tsetse fly eradication, $500,000 in grants to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and its subsidiary organizations for agricultural initiatives and $4.6 million in grants to UNICEF and other organizations, to name a few.

H. Overview of health commitments

14. About $65 million in loans and $19 million in grants have been made available over the last four years, to support various health-care programmes and initiatives, including a $200,000 grants to IAEA for management of the most common cancers in member countries, a $600,000 grant to UNICEF for polio eradication campaigns in Burkina Faso, Chad and the Niger with the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, a $250,000 grant to UNICEF for water and environmental sanitation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, $350,000 in grants to the Carter Center for elimination of Guinea worm in Africa, $1 million in grants to other campaigns for elimination of Guinea worm in Africa with the World Bank and UNICEF, and a $250,000 grant to the UNESCO Association for the Promotion of Employment for the Disabled.

I. Overview of commitments to the global fight against HIV/AIDS

15. About $32 million has been made available in grants over the last four years to support the global fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic, including an $8.11 million grant to WHO for the HIV/AIDS Initiative in Africa, $4 million in grants to UNAIDS, a $3.2 million grant to the jointly sponsored UNFPA Programme for HIV/AIDS Prevention in Central America and the Caribbean, a $2 million grant to co-finance a project jointly developed by the Fund and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to implement HIV/AIDS prevention, and care services among vulnerable groups in targeted Central Asian countries, and a $4 million grant to co-finance the Mother/Child Global Project to Fight HIV/AIDS project, which was initiated by the Fund and will be implemented jointly with UNICEF as co-funder and executing agency.

Annex II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the OPEC Fund for International Development in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the OPEC Fund for International Development,

1. *Decides* to invite the OPEC Fund for International Development to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.